Communities, Cultural Affairs and Labour

Tuesday, June 10, 2008 **Search**

For immediate release

MINISTER ENCOURAGES ISLANDERS TO REGARD PRIME MINISTER'S MESSAGE

CHARLOTTETOWN, PEI
Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, Carolyn Bertram, today acknowledged the significance of the anticipated apology by the Primer Minister to former students of Indian Residential Schools. Prime Minister Stephen Harper, on behalf of the Federal Government and all Canadians, is expected to make a statement of apology in the House of Commons on June 11.

"I hope this very important event will bring greater understanding and awareness to the federal residential schools policy and how it led to the loss of language and culture for Prince Edward Island's Mi'kmaq and Aboriginal Peoples throughout our country," said Minister Bertram. "With his formal apology tomorrow, it is our hope that Prime Minister Harper will help create a new culture where healing can begin for former students. In fact, we hope that this will be a significant move towards reconciliation for Aboriginal people and all Canadians."

"I will be watching the Primer Minister's statement with interest and I encourage all Islanders to do the same," the Minister added. "I also encourage Islanders to commit to a future built on respect and trust with PEI's Mi'kmaq and the broader Aboriginal community."

Darlene Bernard, Chief of the Lennox First Nation and Brian Francis, Chief of the Abegweit First Nation will be attending a ceremony in Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia tomorrow to acknowledge the event.

BACKGROUND:

The Mi'Kmaq Confederacy of Prince Edward Island is the unified voice for organizations working toward Mi'kmaq treaty and Aboriginal rights on PEI. MCPEI connects the shared concerns of both Abegweit and Lennox Island First Nations.

Assembly of First Nations: **www.afn.ca/article.asp?id=3**

Settlement Agreement and the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission, **www.trc-cvr.ca/indexen.html**

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